

PERSpectives

Second Quarter 2001

Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho

Retirement activities can make *these* “The Good Ol’ Days”

By Bill Duncan
PERSI Training Specialist

When you first closed your eyes and dreamed about retirement, those golden years you worked so hard for, you probably pictured long, lazy days of golf, leisurely road trips to exotic places, and countless hours spent in a hammock enjoying cool breezes while sipping sun tea. But with many seniors enjoying healthier lifestyles and longer lives, it is becoming increasingly more common for retirees to take up a new life, new responsibilities, and new creative ways to spend their time. And why not? The kids are gone, and home and family issues are probably settled. These truly

can be the most fulfilling years of your life. These really can be “the good ol’ days.”

The first step is to develop a game plan, a well-balanced menu of activities that you enjoy and that interest you. These activities have to satisfy your needs, such as the need to belong, a need for accomplishment, a need to be creative, or simply a need to be active. Here are some suggestions for activities to pursue:

- ◆ Scout leadership
- ◆ Cycling
- ◆ Senior Olympics
- ◆ Painting
- ◆ Collecting
- ◆ Writing
- ◆ Acting
- ◆ Volunteer work
- ◆ Taking classes

Once you have selected a few choice activities, you can begin making plans and setting goals. Some goals you might consider include:

- ◆ Get your official “Idaho passport,” and travel the state, getting your passport stamped in every county
- ◆ Catch every species of fish native to your state
- ◆ Compile a cookbook of your

family’s favorite recipes

- ◆ Gather a travel journal of stories and photos of the places you have been
- ◆ Cycle 100 miles per year

Or, if you are interested in more “useful” pursuits, you may want to think about service to others; giving back to your community. The greatest satisfaction you will probably receive is when you give of yourself. Kindness and happiness are rare gifts that you can give others. There are many ways to serve, including:

- ◆ Be a ranger at a local park or a Boise Greenbelt volunteer
- ◆ Join some community groups or boards
- ◆ Serve as an advisor to small firms through SCORE, a part of the Small Business Administration
- ◆ Adult Basic Education is always looking for volunteer teachers – check with your local library

You too can enjoy the rewards of a retirement in which every day is a new adventure and every moment is an opportunity to live the dream of your golden years. The “good ol’ days” don’t have to be in the past - they can be now. ◆



PERSI retiree enjoys international success as a concert pianist

by Maxine Thomas,
PERSI Training Specialist

This month I interviewed an internationally known PERSI retiree, Madeleine Hsu Forte, a concert pianist who has performed the works of Ravel, Debussy, Chopin and others, for audiences on three continents. French-born Madeleine also happens to be an alumni faculty member of Boise State University (BSU), where she was Professor of Piano.

Madeleine began her career at a music festival in Vichy, France. A critic wrote of her debut, "A new star has risen in the firmament of artistic glory. A young girl, age 13, played with great brio, Beethoven's *Appassionata*, so that the audience stood and gave a lengthy ovation."

Madeleine received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the Julliard School, and her Ph.D. from New York University. Her career has been long and varied, including performances on radio and television in several countries. She has also presented solo recitals and has performed as a soloist with orchestras in France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, the U.S. and Canada. She now lives in Connecticut and maintains her busy international concert and recording schedule, writes about music, and teaches master classes the world over.



Madeleine Hsu Forte

Although she is in another country, she was able to answer the questions I asked via e-mail. Just goes to show that this truly is a small world thanks to the internet! Here is what she wrote:

I'm in Austria, where we had concerts, and my husband is teaching a summer course. It is fabulous! We live in a defunct composer's home in a village, and we even have our personal cherry tree! I am typing on a German computer, so be patient.

What were your work related activities in Idaho? (I know that you played with Del Parkinson for years)

I taught high school students and children. I gave lots of concerts and lectures in the West and France, Poland, Hungary, etc. besides teaching 18 hours a week at Boise State University. I also organized an "International Piano Series" and a piano scholarship program for gifted American and foreign

students with private donations from big companies and music lovers. Two of the American students are Chuck Enlow, DMA, from Boise, and Daniel Immel, soon to be a DMA, from Montana. I am still in touch with all my foreign students. The "Madeleine Hsu Piano Scholarship" is still growing, with funds at the BSU Scholarship Fund, for BSU students.

What did you like the most about Idaho/Boise?

About my life in Boise: I had two boys, and it was really nice raising them in the "Wild West!" The Boise North End was a great place for the family.

Do you still come back to Boise?

I came back to Idaho in 1998 to perform with the Magic Valley Symphony in Twin Falls.

What is your life like now? Give us a "Day in the Life" portrait of yourself.

Since I retired (early), I have been working full blast as a concert-pianist, giving concerts in the East and in Europe. I made four professional CD's: Ravel, Chopin, Messiaen in collaboration with my husband, and Debussy. You can find all this information on my website: at www.madeleineforte.com If you have speakers, you can click and listen to my music! I gave a concert at the Yale museum, and my recital was taped. It is interesting, as it is done on period

How to work after retirement and collect your PERSI benefits

This article appeared in our retiree newsletter several years ago, but it is a very important topic for many of our retirees, so bears repeating.

If you're considering returning to work after retirement, it's important that you know IRS regulations and Idaho State laws that may affect your retirement benefit should you return to work. The legal responsibility to comply with federal and state regulations belongs to you and your employer. You are the one who will have to deal with the consequences should the IRS discover non-compliance.

As a PERSI retiree, you may work for any private-sector employer as long as you want and as many hours as you want without affecting your retirement benefits. If however, you want to work for any employer that belongs to PERSI, the following restrictions apply:

90-day Break in Service

If you are an **early** retiree (younger than age 65, or 60 for police/PERSI firefighters) you must have at least a 90-day break if you want to return to work for your last employer. The IRS has very strict definitions of "breaks of service" to ensure that individuals do not receive benefit payments if they have what's called "continued employment." Therefore, since March 14, 1996, to meet IRS requirements, PERSI has had two

conditions for early retirees returning to work.

1. You must have at least a 90-day break between retirement and re-employment with the **same** employer regardless of the number of hours worked, and,
2. There can be no promise of future employment made to you when you leave employment.

Such a break is not required if you retire at age 65 or later (age 60 for police/PERSI firefighters).

If you are an early retiree and return to work for the same employer within 90 days, any pension benefit payments received plus interest must be returned to PERSI.

State employees: All agencies of the State of Idaho are considered one employer.

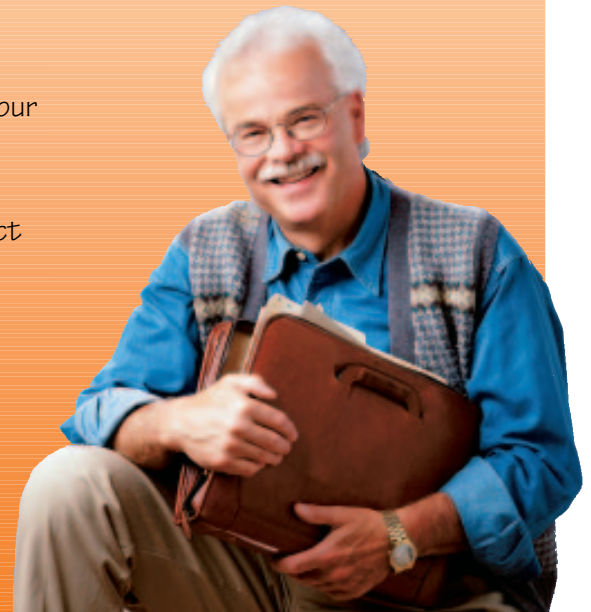
20-hour week limits

If you want to work for a PERSI employer and continue to receive your monthly pension payments, you cannot work 20 hours or more per week (teachers working 1/2 contract or more) for five consecutive months or more. Doing so means that your monthly retirement payments must stop, and both employee and employer contributions must be paid to PERSI from the beginning date of re-employment. You must also

pay back **all** benefit payments received after your re-employment date plus interest. This applies to **all** retirees, no matter your age.

Once employment ends, contributions stop and you may once again begin receiving your original pension benefits. A separate allowance based on your reemployment period will be added.

If your period of reemployment ends up being less than five months, PERSI will return contributions to you, your employer will receive a credit for that amount, and you will receive retroactive benefit payments covering the reemployment period. If you are working less than 20 hours per week or less than five consecutive months, no contributions are required and you will continue to receive your monthly pension payments. ♦



instruments from 1842 and 1881. It should be released in 2002.

Tell us about your family. Are their interests similar?

Unexpectedly, I got remarried to a Yale Music professor who was my son's advisor! We work, travel professionally, swim, walk, etc. together! The two of us are having a blast! I think that I have been blessed with a good life. My second son (the one from Yale!), Olen Hsu, now a successful sculptor and conceptual artist in Chicago, was born and raised in Boise. He had wonderful schooling at Boise High School and one semester at BSU, wonderful opportunities, and got a solid foundation that he might not have had in a larger city.

What did you like about BSU?


At BSU, I liked the freedom I had to organize lots of things and to be very active, and the great students, as well as some very good colleagues. Boise will always be dear to us for all the great remembrances: 26 years of my adult life!

If you could change one thing about your life, what would that be?

I am among the people who can say "I would not have changed a thing about my career, my life and the world I live in." Maybe it is due to my state of mind! In Idaho I was a pioneer, being the first one to perform on Channel 4 TV, and after that initial taping I recorded many concerts and educational programs, alone and with

students and guest artists. I still have all the tapes! I started that in 1972. Here, now, I am pursuing the career of a pianist started when I was a girl. ♦

I D A H O

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